



**HoCoClimateAction.org**  
Howard County, Maryland

**HB0398 – Abundant, Affordable, Clean Energy – Procurement and Development (AACE Act)**

**Hearing Date: February 6, 2025**

**Bill Sponsor: Delegate Charkoudian**

**Committee: Economic Matters Committee**

**Submitting: Liz Feighner for Howard County Climate Action**

**Position: Favorable**

[HoCo Climate Action](#) is a [350.org](#) local chapter and a grassroots organization representing approximately 1,400 subscribers. We are also a member of the [Climate Justice Wing](#) of the [Maryland Legislative Coalition](#).

We urge you to vote favorably on HB0398 which provides a path forward to addressing resource adequacy in the state and alleviating the burden on Maryland ratepayers, while providing important protections for Maryland workers. The solutions in the bill can be implemented more quickly than ill-conceived resource adequacy proposals like new gas-fired power plants and untested small modular nuclear reactors which would inevitably take longer to come online and jeopardize the state meeting its climate requirements.

Electricity costs are increasing rapidly in large part because of problems with PJM, our grid operator. Proposed clean renewable energy projects have been stuck in [PJM's interconnection queue](#) for years and the queue has been so long that they [stopped accepting projects](#) at one point. By the time projects clear the queue and are approved, they are no longer financially viable and many are not built. Now, increasing electricity demand due to high-intensity energy use facilities like data centers plays a major role in our rising rates.

This has caused a mismatch between supply and demand that has dramatically increased capacity prices. In the most recent PJM capacity auction, there was an [800% increase](#) that will be passed on to Maryland ratepayers.

The Abundant, Affordable Clean Energy (AACE Act) brings on new energy projects that serve Maryland's load requirements within this decade on a least-cost basis, while allowing flexibility to respond to potential shifts in future energy markets. This combination of rapidity, low-cost, and flexibility makes AACE a "no regrets" path to achieving resource adequacy to meet current and future electric load requirements in Maryland. AACE's pathway to energy development is in line with the State's carbon reduction goals, allows for the flexibility to respond to future energy demands, and provides solutions to resource adequacy in this decade.

For all of these reasons, we strongly support HB0398 and urge a FAVORABLE report in Committee.

Howard County Climate Action

Submitted by Liz Feighner, Steering and Advocacy Committee

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